

PANELLIST'S STATEMENT: MICHAEL E J STUBBINGS, GCHQ

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The Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) is an autonomous department within the United Kingdom Civil Service, and is one of the UK's three intelligence agencies. Like all large organizations it has to give careful attention to the cost-effectiveness of all aspects of its operations. Its approach to the handling of these pressures in the field of computer security is documented in the paper on accreditation which accompanies the panel proceedings. Its security interest and position as one of the UK's most technically-orientated departments has offered many opportunities to consider the implications of different approaches to computer security.

It is normal practice within GCHQ to separate the issue of confidentiality from those of integrity and availability. The latter two are dealt with by individual projects and are not subject to review by GCHQ security staff except insofar as the security profiles of any measures are concerned. In GCHQ, effectiveness in achieving integrity and availability is the business of the project staff, not of the security department. My area is strictly that of confidentiality, and my role is as senior computer and communications security accreditor, leading a team of 5 people. All of us are full-time IT security consultants covering all aspects of GCHQ's work.

GCHQ has been foremost in the UK in adopting and implementing the risk management approach mandated by the Prime Minister for UK government use. This approach is described in the Review of Protective Security, published by the Cabinet Office. The adoption of management disciplines from the commercial world has given further impetus to the consideration of cost-effectiveness at all stages of a system's development and use.

We are well aware that the UK is not alone in considering these issues: last year's presentation of the proposed revision to the Office of Management and Budget's Circular No. A-130 Appendix III demonstrated some of the same principles, particularly in its definition of 'adequate security'. I, along with the other panellists, look forward to discussing these issues with delegates.